the orange groves of central and southern Florida into tupelo locations. Special effort is made by some tupelo beekeepers to move to tupelo, leaving other already producing crops to do so. After the short tupelo season, there are no more honey or pollen plants along the rivers. The apiaries must be moved again to new locations or the bees will soon starve.[20]

The nature of the swamp in which tupelo trees grow adds additional expenses to production. On some sites the swamp terrain makes it impossible to use forklifts to move palletized hives so all hives must be loaded and unloaded one at a time by hand. Fluctuating water levels can quickly cut off the beekeeper's access to his apiaries and drown his bees. Since the trees grow at least knee-deep in the river it is sometimes necessary to build platforms 14 to 16 feet high and hundreds of feet long to keep hives above the water level.[21] Barges on which to move the bees are the only access the beekeeper has to such locations.

Since the tupelo bloom is so short, sometimes lasting as little as 5 days, the effect of the weather on production is profound. Untimely thunderstorms, winds, and other weather factors common to the area, can quickly knock off blooms and end the entire crop production.

In order to get fine, unmixed tupelo honey, colonies must be stripped of all stores just as the white tupelo bloom begins. The bees are then given clean boxes and combs in which to place the tupelo honey. This new crop must then be removed before it can be mixed with additional honey sources. The timing of these operations is critical and years of experience are needed to produce a fine product that will certify as tupelo honey.

Conclusion:

The Tupelo Beekeepers' Association of Florida hopes that the factual information we have given here will help you appreciate the tupelo honey our members and their families produce. Look for **TUPELO HONEY** when you are shopping and **ENJOY, ENJOY** for eating pleasure and good health.

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Written by Benita C. Wiggins

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TUPELO HONEY

Are you getting the REAL THING?

Introduction:

"My love's as sweet as **Tupelo Honey.** Just like the **real** thing from the bee."[1]

So the words of a recent rock melody go, but when you buy **Tupelo Honey** are you getting the real thing? The Tupelo Beekeepers' Association of Florida is concerned that you know about the fine and distinctive characteristics of good tupelo honey. Whether you are buying a one pound jar or a railroad car of tupelo honey we want you to be able to appreciate having purchased 'the real thing from the bee!!!'

Where Does Tupelo Honey Come From?

Although several different tupelo trees yield large quantities of honey in the southeastern United States, the Apalachicola River basin has become well known for its distinctive flavored tupelo honey.[2] It is also produced along the Ochlockonee and Choctahatchee Rivers.[3] These areas are the only places in the world where certified tupelo honey is produced. This is because of the profuse growth of white tupelo, **Nyssa ogeche,** that produces good quality tupelo honey.[4]

The white tupelo tree, as it is most commonly called, usually stands 50 to 75 feet high and is 2 to 3 feet in diameter. The base is often enlarged with a fairly straight trunk covered with thin gray-brown deeply furrowed bark. It's branches are smooth and light brown. The thick pointed leaves of the tree are slender with the upper surface being dark green and lustrous. The lower surfaces of the leaves are pale and downy.[5]

White tupelo blooms from early April to early May, depending on the year's weather. Black tupelo, **Nyssa biflora,** blooms in advance of white tupelo and is used to build up bee colony strength and stores. Since black tupelo produces a less desirable, darker colored honey, which will granulate, it is sold as bakery grade honey.[6]

Characteristics of Tupelo Honey:

Quantity —Of the 20,300,000 pounds of honey produced in the state of Florida in a typical year such as 1980, only 282,880 pounds were certified as Tupelo Honey.[7]

Flavor — mild, pleasant, very popular.

Density — good body, 16.0% - 18.6% moisture.[8]

Freedom from crystals —White tupelo honey usually does not granulate.[9]

Color — light with a greenish cast.[10]

Carbohydrate composition — Dextrose 25.95%, Levulose 43.27%, Sucrose 1.21%, Maltose 7.97%, Higher Sugars 1.1.%,[11] Relatively high in levulose and low in dextrose.[12]

Freedom from impurities.[13]

Vitamins —thiamine, riboflavin, ascorbic acid, pyridoxine, panthothenic acid, and nicotinic acid, all of which play vital roles in human nutrition.[14]

Minerals —iron, copper, sodium, potassium, magnesium, manganese, calcium, and phosphorous. These elements are all essential to good nutrition.[15]

Labeling and Florida Department of Agriculture Certification of Tupelo Honey:

Tupelo honey can be identified by chemical examination of levulose and dextrose levels.[16] It can also be certified by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services based on microscopic pollen counts. The distinctive shape of tupelo pollen makes this test possible. Tupelo honey producers may acquire chemist analysis papers certifying their honey as tupelo. These papers are often of interest to potential buyers of bulk quantities.[17] It is very important to note here that in a typical year such as 1980, there were only 416 drums of honey certified as tupelo by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.[18]

Honey may be labeled "tupelo" or "tupelo and wildflower." In the second case the buyer has no quarantee of just how much real tupelo honey he may be getting.

The word "pure" on a honey label designates that the product is pure honey, not necessarily all pure tupelo. Good white tupelo honey, unmixed with other honies, usually will not granulate.[19]

Why You Should Expect To Pay More For Fine Tupelo Honey:

Tupelo honey, like any other excellent specialty honey, sells at a premium price. It is important that you understand the reasons.

Like any other product in the free enterprise system, tupelo honey follows the laws of supply and demand. Because of its superb table quality, distinctive flavor, and non-granulation it is very popular with bottlers. Many households have long considered tupelo honey as their finest choice. The demand for tupelo honey is now expanding to a growing world market. On the other hand supply is limited by the natural environment in which the white tupelo tree will grow profuse enough to produce fine white tupelo honey. Draining and encroaching development are steadily reducing this swamp terrain.

Much of the prime tupelo terrain is in government wilderness areas. Federal and state regulations are increasingly impeding usage of these areas by beekeepers. In addition to competing for limited tupelo locations, tupelo honey producers also face the normal rigors of rising transportation and equipment cost. Bees are often moved from